

Downtown Business District
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 4, 2015
330 Main Street, Middletown, CT

Attendees

Diane Gervais (Chair)	Cathy Duncan (Chamber of Commerce)
Jennifer Alexander (Commissioner)	Tom Marano (Planning Department)
Valerie Scribano (Commissioner)	William Russo (Public Works)
Mike DiPiro (Commissioner)	Trevor Davis (Business Owner)
Peter Harding (Commissioner)	Shane Grant (DBD)
Marc Levin (Commissioner)	
Sean Moriarty (Police Department)	

Minutes

- Motion made by Marc Levin to approve
- 2nd by Jennifer Alexander
- Minutes accepted.

Treasurer's Report – Mike DiPiro

Mike reported we are under budget in some line items and over on others. There is a surplus of \$20, 000.00 this year, with a balance of \$96,643.00 in our checkbook. We will be asking the City of Middletown for our 2nd installment of \$70,000.00/balance in a check form, to avoid the transfer fee to our account. We welcome Julia Hasbrouck from Accountables, LLC to oversee our bookkeeping services.

- Financials approved
- 2nd
- Financials accepted

Planning- Tom Marano

The Hajjar Project passed City Council last night. There was great show of support and passion from the Downtown Business District and Restaurant owners. This is a good project and will follow through all the hurdles, to making it work. Tom is also co-working on renting/leasing commercial office spaces in the downtown area.

Tom and Cathy Duncan from the Chamber are going to resurrect “marketing lunches”. These will be an informal lunch to include group business owners to share what is happening on an individual level and talk about new ideas, in promoting business downtown.

Maintenance Report – Tom Ford not available

Diane Gervais reports everything is going fine.

Beautification – Diane Gervais

None

Police Report – Sean Moriarty

The police department has been keeping ahead of traffic issues due to the winter storms. There have been a couple of small issues with the warming center at South Church, but are working through them.

In general, there has been more police presence on Main Street, and is greatly appreciated.

As a reminder, please report any panhandling to the police department.

Public Works – William Russo

The public works department has been doing a fantastic job in plowing, removing snow and handling the day to tasks at hand. The businesses along Main Street have also been doing a great job on shoveling their store fronts and keeping things clear.

Looking forward to the spring /summer months, the Fireworks are scheduled for Friday, July 3rd, with a rain date of Sunday, July 5th.

The Public Works department is putting together a nice plan for the city in moving us forward with a lot of support and excitement behind it. They are in the process of putting in bike paths from Tuttle Rd. to Washington St. They are also planning a huge park renovation with upgrades to Palmer, WWMS and Pat Kidney Fields. In the near future there will be a “dog park” at Veterans Park on the Millbrook Road entrance side of the park.

The department is in the bidding process of two major road jobs:

1. Westlake Drive to Smith Street
2. Route 66, Boston Rd to George St

Parking Report - Geen Thazhampallath

None

North End Report - Anne Marie Cannata/Buttonwood Tree

None

Chamber of Commerce – Cathy Duncan

The Chamber has rescheduled guest speaker, John McCain for the March 9th breakfast at the Crown Plaza in Cromwell.

Realizing the Zenelis building (Middlesex Fruiterie) is a retail front property, the Karate Studio will not be able to open as planned.

DBD Guide – Shane Grant

The month of January has been a slow month for most businesses on Main Street.

There is a lot of confusion and frustration with the “new” parking kiosks at Melilli Plaza.

The visitors/potential customers coming into park are finding difficult to remember their license plate numbers/letters and feel the one hour “free” parking is not working. The timeframe is not conducive to the daily operation of business owners. Upon returning back to their vehicles they are receiving a ticket. Changes need to be made for this new system to be successful.

Chair Update – Diane Gervais

DBD Chairperson’s Update Feb 4th, 2015

Holiday Gift Bag Giveaway: The program went very well. The bags were distributed at the Chamber Breakfast and then at each Holiday on Main ST Saturday event. Groups of them were also distributed by various downtown businesses. The public seemed to enjoy receiving them and it seemed to contribute to a friendly atmosphere downtown. I think it is worth doing again next year.

Gift Card: Gift Card sales are continuing to run smoothly. We had some first of the year kinks due to software issues and hardware failures, but overall things are greatly improved.

Both the Hospital and the City of Middletown purchased large quantities for the holidays, as well as some new corporate purchases. We need to continue to pursue the corporate and business purchases. More cards are on order, and I am awaiting our renewal information from Store Financial. We need to decide on our renewal this spring.

Bookkeeper: Our new Book Keeper began on Jan 5th. Bob and she transferred the files for both the accounting and the payroll. She is working from our office and so far things are going smoothly.

Budget: We need to begin work on our new budget and on our yearend report. I would like to schedule a working meeting for this on Tuesday February 10th from 9:30-10:30

***Downtown Marketing – Marc Levin**

Special presentation with Mark Zurzola and Larry Piretti, from Tag Team Business Partners, LLC, 2189 Silas Deane Hwy., Suite 11 Rocky Hill, CT. 06067. They will be advertising in promoting marketing/advertising for the downtown business district and business owners in Middletown. This campaign would be covered through Channel 3 eyewitness news, Better Connecticut Show, advertising in the holiday issue of Better Homes and Gardens. (6 month campaign program)

The commissioners made a motion and seconded to pay forward \$60,000.00 this fiscal year to advertise with Tag Team Business Partners, LLC. A creative content meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 25th at 4:00 in the DBD Office.

Please refer to the 2015 Advertising Proposal prepared by Mark Zurzola.

Motion to adjourn by and approved.